

=THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL=

Lesson 9

The Wilderness Wanderings

INTRODUCTION: For forty years after the Israelites refused to go into the land of promise, they wandered in the wilderness. Let us look at the events and occasions of these forty years.

- I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WILDERNESS. This wilderness was a large triangle bordered by the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the southern boundary of Palestine, and a depression at the gulf of Akaba. This area is about 22,000 square miles. It may be called the “Wilderness of Wanderings.” It was a barren region, and though there was some grazing land, it was desired very little by man and was left virtually to itself. It was basically a region of sand, limestone, sandstone, and granite. For forty years the Israelites were left in this wilderness. They could not possibly have survived without the guiding hand of God.
- II. THE PURPOSE FOR THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.
 1. They wept in unbelief, Numbers 14:1. These people who had seen God perform so many miracles came to the place where they believed that God’s hand was limited.
 2. They murmured against Moses and Aaron, Numbers 14:2. Complaining against God’s men also caused these wanderings.
 3. They had a desire to die, Numbers 14:2b. They wished they had died! When a person gets to the place where he would rather die than live, he is about to receive the chastening hand of God.
 4. They wanted to go back, Numbers 14:3. When a person would rather go backwards than forward and looks to the past rather than the future, he is about to be chastened by God.
 5. They wanted to choose their own leader rather than accept God’s leader, Numbers 14:4.
 6. They complained against the Lord, Numbers 14:27.
- III. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.
 1. They would not see the promised land, Numbers 14:29. No one twenty years old and upward was permitted to enter the promised land.
 2. Every person twenty and upward was to die in the wilderness, Numbers 14:29.
 3. They suffered a year for each day, Numbers 14:33, 34. They searched out the land for forty days and refused to go in. God gave them a year of suffering for each day they searched out the land or each day of their lack of faith.
- IV. GOD’S PROVISION IN THE WILDERNESS. Even though God was punishing His people, He provided for them. This is found in the lives of many of God’s people. Elijah received provisions even though he was outside the will of God. Jonah was the same way, as were many others in the Bible. God punishes His children, but He still provides their necessities. Let us look at His provisions.
 1. Since there were 600,000 men twenty years old and upward, there were probably two million people. Think of the marvelous provision God must have made for His people in the wilderness.
 2. He provided for them with manna. This manna was given by God as soon as they left Egypt, and God continued to give them manna daily.
 3. Occasionally God would supply quail. This was probably a sign and was only a temporary provision.
 4. God provided water from the rock. An interesting thing about this is that Moses’ sin which kept him from seeing the promised land was striking the rock twice. The rock was smitten one time, and there came water! After that, the rock was only to be spoken to and then it would give its water. The rock is Christ—smitten once and spoken to daily.
 5. God saw that their shoes did not wear out for forty years. Picture these people now wandering for forty years—homeless, Arabic-type people, gypsies, you might say—yet all the time cared for by God. Only the necessities were provided, however.
- V. THE TYPE OF THE WILDERNESS. Notice the typology of the Jews’ travels.
 1. Deliverance from Egypt represents salvation.
 2. Crossing the Red Sea represents baptism.
 3. Receiving the manna represents the blessings of God.

4. The tabernacle being built represents our faithfulness to the house of God.
5. The tablets of stone represent the fact that God wants the Christian to live in the Word of God.
After this came only two things: testing and the promised land. God has much victory and many blessings for those who stand the testing. The Jews did pass through the wilderness. If they could have stood the test, they could have had the blessing. It was the will of God that the Jews go through testing, but not for forty years. If we can stand the testing when God gives it to us, we will not have to endure it so long.

CONCLUSION: The sad thing is this—God had a chosen man, a chosen people, and a chosen task. The people refused, the man sinned, and the people and the man never realized their fullest. One people and one man have one chance for the fullest blessings of God. Here at Pacific Baptist we are on the threshold of Kadesh-barnea. The promised land lies ahead. May we keep our faith in God, keep going forward, and take over the land of milk and honey!